



Widening participation for social justice: poverty and commons access to environment

Dipayan Dey

Chair: South Asian Forum for Environment, India

Article History

Received: 2 February 2015

Accepted: 19 February 2015

Published: 1 April 2015

Citation

Dipayan Dey. Widening Participation for Social Justice: Poverty and Commons Access to Environment. *Climate Change*, 2015, 1(2), 139

Publication License



© The Author(s) 2015. Open Access. This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

General Note



Article is recommended to print as color version in recycled paper. *Save Trees, Save Climate.*

In this international Year of Sanitation, one in five of the world's population, which includes two-thirds as women, live in abject poverty; on the margins of existence, without adequate clean water, sanitation or healthcare, without food and education. This enormous mass basically depends on the natural resources of the environment around them. The loadstone of urbanization though doesn't consider them as stakeholders neither partner the poverty. Social justice is not only denied it is refuted rather. The concept of widening participation in sustainable development has different meanings for different countries, depending on the particular country's overall political and socioeconomic status. As the above quotation indicates, for many of the poorer countries widening participation is not a matter of accessing right to natural resources at all, even at the most basic level. It is displacing them in the name of rehabilitation and thereby narrowing their livelihood opportunities to facilitate elimination of the poor commons.

As mentioned in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, rural development is stagnating worldwide. For people living in rural areas the (over)exploitation of natural resources is one of the few options remaining to avoid poverty. The over-exploitation of natural resources is seriously compromising long-term development, ensuring that people remain poor, trapped in a so-called poverty trap. 'Bio-rights' offers a novel approach to addressing this situation, an approach with the potential to effectively increasing income while at the same time stimulating conservation and sustainable exploitation of natural resources. Global stakeholders profit from the long term benefits of the natural resources, while local people gain an increased income.

Nevertheless, it is important to note here some key distinctions that serve to perpetuate the North-South divide on this issue, the most important coming from international donor agencies and their policy-makers. The present paper would peruse the participatory machinery in global south for sustainable development and assess the impact of allowing commons an access to nation's natural resources.